



ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL

Award Winning Parks Service

(APSE Performance Networks Most Improved 2013)

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Aberdeen

- Population 225,000.
- Land area 186 Sq Km.
- Oil Capital of Europe.
- Aberdeen is the second most competitive location to do business in the UK.
- Aberdeen has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the UK.
- Home to Aberdeen Football Club.



Aberdeen – Some Facts You May Not Know

- Aberdeen Harbour Board, established in 1136, is Britain's oldest business.
- 640,000 cubic feet of Aberdeen granite went into the construction of the Forth Rail Bridge.
- The self-seal envelope was developed in Aberdeen.
- Until 1858 Aberdeen had two universities, the same number as the whole of England.
- Almost half the recoverable oil reserves in the North Sea have still to be developed.
- Union Bridge in the centre of Aberdeen is the largest single-span granite arch in the world.
- Aberdeen has won the Britain in Bloom contest a record number of times.

Environmental Services Overview

- Parks, gardens and green space.
- Amenity land including arboriculture and woodland.
- Countryside services.
- Play areas.
- Bereavement services including crematoria and cemeteries.
- Allotments.
- Beach.
- Service employs 225 staff.
- Current budget of £7.5million.





Challenges We Faced

- Significant budget cuts.
- Recruitment freeze.
- Aging fleet, plant and equipment but no spend permitted.
- Service 'perceived' as expensive.
- Market tested - threat of services being outsourced.
- Close internal and external scrutiny of service.
- Low staff moral.
- High levels of staff sickness absence.
- Increase in complaints.
- Public / Council expectation.
- Service reputation.
- Negative press.

How We Overcame the Challenges

- Started from scratch.
- Reviewed services top to bottom.
- Reduced operational costs but maintained quality.
- Proved service was competitive and ‘best value’.
- Linked service to Administration’s vision, priorities and objectives.
- Priority Based Budgeting (PBB).
- Stakeholder engagement.
- Grew number of successful partnerships significantly.
- Promoted and marketed service.
- Everyone working together.



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What We Did To Improve

- Restructured service / teams
- Agreed priorities with council and staff.
- Identified savings but also cost pressures.
- Grass cutting review / public consultation.
- Rationalisation of depots.
- Fleet / plant review.
- Managed staff.
- Support and buy in from Trade Unions.
- Increased staff training / staff skills.
- Investment in play areas / parks.
- Local KPIs to measure area performance.
- Park improvement action plans in conjunction with Friends groups.
- Regular park walkabouts with team, senior managers and councillors.



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What We Have Achieved

- Services retained in house.
- Significant savings delivered.
- Improved performance and quality of services.
- Positive team culture.
- New fleet and equipment.
- Secured external funding and additional council funding.
- Increased income through private work and sponsorship.
- Full support of the Council.
- Positive press and media stories.
- Award winning service.



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Success Stories



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- Duthie Park Restoration.
- Hazlehead Climate Change Park.
- Tree For Every Citizen.
- Play Area Investment.
- Hazlehead Nursery – Social Enterprise project.
- In Bloom Campaign.
- Green Flags.
- Increased number of successful partnerships / sponsorship.
- Aberdeen Greenspace Legacy Projects.
- Recognised internally and externally as a well managed, successful service.





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Awards

- APSE Performance Networks Parks, Open Spaces and Horticultural Services Most Improved Performer 2013
- Beautiful Scotland, Aberdeen, Winner of City Category 2013
- Beautiful Scotland, Duthie Park, Winner of Jim Murdie Trophy for Permanent Landscaping 2013
- Nancy Ovens Trust, Duthie Park, Winner of Best Play Space 2013
- Scotland's Finest Woods Awards, Tullos Hill, Highly Commended, New Native Woods Award 2013
- Aberdeen Civic Society, Duthie Park Restoration Project, Winner 2013


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What We Continue To Do

- Celebrate what we do well.
- Learn from what we do not do so well.
- Identify and consider future challenges and how these will be met.
- Constantly review performance.
- Identify initiatives to improve the service.
- Identify initiatives to improve communications within and out with the service.
- Look at team dynamics and how these could be improved.
- Identify the service's customers and how the service meets customer needs.
- Identify further partnership working opportunities with community groups, third sector organisations and businesses.
- Continue to deliver a quality and award winning service.

Thank You – Any Questions?



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